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NOTES AND NEWS

Notes on Madia sativa and Related Species.—Madia capitata Nutt., M. sativa Molina and M. gracilis (Smith) Keck are closely related and often difficult to distinguish. They tend to intergrade and diagnoses in current manuals lack clearcut characteristics by which to delimit the species. In 1965, at the suggestion of John Thomas Howell, I checked the odors of these plants in the field in the Santa Cruz Mountains, central California. Odor is one of the distinguishing characteristics given, although not a very satsfactory one, for two reasons: 1, it applies only to fresh material, and 2, there are no names for odors as such. Names for odors are always given as similar to other, supposedly universally known ones, or in terms of subjective reaction, which necessarily varies from person to person.

The first discovery of this investigation was rather surprising. The troublesome forms intermediate between M. sativa and M. gracilis smelled different from either of these species, being basically similar but lacking both the spicy fragrance of gracilis and the heavy unpleasant odor of sativa. These considerations led me to speculate that another distinct entity probably was involved and, with the encouragement of Rimo Bacigalupi, I attempted a diagnosis of this "new" variety (as I would have evaluated it) under an appropriately descriptive epithet, based on Hesse 3318 (IEPS). This analysis proved inconclusive because morphological characters proved to be varyingly intermediate, with the single exception of the achenes, which were found to be consistently small (only a little longer than those of gracilis) and slender; in shape most nearly like those of capitata. Howell had further commented that probably sometime someone would conclude that all these species were in reality one variable species. If so, the earliest name, M. sativa, should be used. There is much to be said in favor of this idea. For instance, my specimens, 3315 (CAS), 3317, 3237, 3316, 3318, 3234, 3321, 3319, and 3232 (all JEPS) form an almost continuous series, morphologically, from gracilis to capitata. Moreover, further investigation showed that even the odors of this complex graded into one another, i.e., all the intermediate forms did not smell exactly the same but tended toward one or another of the species heretofore recognized. It is my hope that these investigations will be of help to those who may wish to delve more deeply into the Madia sativa complex.—V. F. Hesse, Boulder Creek, California.